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General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

28th plenary meeting
Monday, 22 October 2012, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 9 and 14

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/67/3)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/67/298)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Notes by the Secretary-General (A/67/82 and A/67/270)

The President: In connection with agenda item 9, I would like to recall for members that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2012, to consider agenda item 9 in its entirety in plenary, on the understanding that the administrative, programme and budgetary aspects should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee.

At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 to consider item 9 in its entirety in plenary, the relevant parts of chapter I of the report that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees will be considered by the Committee concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

In connection with agenda item 14, members will recall that, pursuant to resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly decided to consider the item the chapters of the annual report of the Economic and Social Council relevant to the integrated and coordinated implementation of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including through the participation in its discussions of the President of the Council.

I am grateful for the opportunity to give the opening remarks before the presentation of the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2012 (A/67/3). The General Assembly and the Council have a long-standing tradition of cooperation, and I look forward to strengthening that valuable relationship throughout the sixty-seventh session. My Office and the Council's Bureau have intensified their contacts over the past month with the aim of improving coordination and the overall effectiveness of our work. President Koterec and I have discussed a number of issues of common interest, including how to strengthen our shared approach to the sustainable development agenda and to promoting a more inclusive global economy.

In my address to the Economic and Social Council special ministerial meeting, one of the questions I raised was how to fortify multilateral responses to development challenges. I welcomed the Council's commitment to playing a more pronounced role in the post-2015 discussions, in the light of the mandate it received from world leaders gathered in Rio in June. The statement issued at the end of the Ministerial Meeting reaffirmed that a more sustainable development model can be achieved only through a broad alliance

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of peoples, Governments, civil society and the private sector. That view is in line with the message of the "The future we want", the outcome document (resolution 66/288, annex) of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

I believe that we should also encourage enhanced participation in our efforts by the world's public policy institutes and think-tanks. I hope that we can work together to find ways to draw on their tremendous capabilities more effectively so that we can benefit from their wisdom and experience more than has been the case in the past.

A mandate was given to the General Assembly to establish an intergovernmental process to propose options for an effective financing strategy to advance the Rio+20 agenda. We were also given the responsibility of preparing a high-level forum, to be launched at the beginning of next session. In addition, the General Assembly was tasked with establishing a working group to propose a list of sustainable development goals for consideration and adoption by the plenary. The Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda is another significant part of this process, as is the role of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with paragraphs 82 and 83 of the Rio+20 concluding document.

Let me underline the critical importance of enhancing coordination between the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly at this session. We need to ensure that our work is mutually reinforcing and complementary, and that we avoid any duplication of effort. Here, I would like to mention Africa in particular. I deeply believe that we must better address its special needs in the time ahead so that we can bridge the gap effectively between that continent's promise and the reality on the ground. I believe that the United Nations should truly prioritize supporting African nations in unlocking their full potential.

As I underlined in my address to last month's Economic and Social Council ministerial meeting, I am of the opinion that the General Assembly should play a more pronounced role in the ongoing debate on global economic governance. Let me be very clear that the intent is not to infringe on existing prerogatives but to complement existing efforts, in order to help answer a number of questions related to transparency, inclusiveness and legitimacy.

To that end, I would like to bring three mutually reinforcing initiatives to members' attention. The first is the participation of the Economic and Social Council in helping to organize an informal high-level debate in the General Assembly on the United Nations in world economic governance, in accordance with resolution 66/256. I will continue to consult with the Member States and President Koterec on the matter and expect to reach a common position on how to proceed in the near future.

As President, I signal my intention to build closer and more formalized relations with international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as with the Group of Twenty (G-20). That constitutes a second aspect of the approach I believe we should take. I would welcome the involvement of the Economic and Social Council in this endeavour, to be coordinated with the General Assembly. Senior representatives from the G-20 will continue to brief the Assembly, as has been the custom in previous years.

In my view, we could all benefit from regularizing those interactions. That is why I have proposed to launch a process leading to the establishment of an effective consultative framework between the General Assembly and various intergovernmental financial institutions and informal groupings, with a focus on the G-20.

A third aspect involves holding debates and conferences on global economic issues under the auspices of the Assembly ahead of the G-20 Summit in Saint Petersburg next year. In that context, I am pleased to welcome the idea of the Government of Kazakhstan to coordinate the agenda of the May 2013 Astana Economic Forum with related efforts here in the United Nations. That annual gathering of distinguished economists and some of the world's most innovative and influential minds from the private sector, think-tanks and civil society is an important platform for exchanging views, experiences and best practices on major economic, financial and social development issues.

I believe that a more dynamic Economic and Social Council can make an even stronger contribution to the work of the General Assembly. The report before us today serves as an important reference point in the process. In accordance with resolution 61/16, I will shortly announce the appointment of co-facilitators to lead consultations on how to further strengthen the Council. In my view, the task is of the utmost importance

for the General Assembly, especially given the mandate we share with Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat to follow up on the outcomes of Rio+20, as well as our common responsibilities to set the post-2015 agenda.

I believe that the Assembly and the Council can become central pillars in ongoing multilateral cooperation efforts in the related fields of sustainable development and global economic governance, in keeping with the terms of Chapter IX of the Charter of the United Nations. By working more closely together, we can help further promote the role of the United Nations in setting the world on a more secure, equitable and prosperous path.

I give the floor to the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, His Excellency Mr. Luis-Alfonso de Alba, to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico), Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to thank you, Sir, for your introductory remarks to our debate on the agenda item before us. Your words, in particular your readiness to cooperate very closely with the Economic and Social Council, are without doubt very welcome. All members of the Economic and Social Council consider it to be essential, as you said, that we work together and pool our efforts, especially in developing the mandates with which we have been entrusted by meetings recently held, particularly that of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). You may rest assured that all members of the Economic and Social Council and the Bureau will work as closely as possible with you.

The report that I have submitted for 2012 (A/67/3) reveals a year of productive work and a wide range of activities. At the same time, it has also been a year of preparation for tackling new challenges under the able leadership of Ambassador Koterec of Slovakia. I would like on this occasion simply to draw attention to some of the most prominent aspects of our work during the period.

First, I would recall that, as the principal organ of the United Nations responsible for development matters, the Economic and Social Council has served as a platform in 2012 for over 40 ministers, high-level political policymakers, eminent academics, leading businessmen and members of civil society to share views and know-how regarding opportunities for job creation for all. In association with the International Labour Organization and the United Nations system in general, the Economic and Social Council has advocated an integrated, results-based approach to addressing the employment crisis. Specifically, it has recommended that collective endeavours focus on productive employment, on jobs in the green economy, particularly for young people, and on social protection. Those recommendations were set down in a comprehensive ministerial declaration, emphasizing also the need for collective measures to be immediately put into effect to boost productivity and generate quality jobs for the unemployed and underemployed throughout the world.

As in previous years, ministerial considerations were based on a consultative process. National and regional views of problems related to employment were folded into the general consideration of the job crisis at the world level. Through preparatory meetings in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America and the Caribbean, consultations were held with key regional actors on matters ranging from productivity to small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as inclusive growth. The consultations were a major platform for the exchange of best practices and regional experiences.

In addition, eight countries made voluntary national presentations to inform the Council on the progress achieved towards their national development objectives and on continuing difficulties in achieving their employment-related objectives and aims.

In the series of high-level meetings held, the 2012 Development Cooperation Forum enjoyed unprecedented levels of participation and interest. Indeed, the Forum, which has met on only three occasions, has already consolidated its position as a critical space for dialogue on policies and technical guidance regarding development. Recent appeals to make cooperation for development more inclusive will no doubt ensure a greater role and prominence for work of this nature.

In the series of coordination meetings, consideration was given to the follow-up by the United Nations system to the Economic and Social Council ministerial declaration of 2011 on education. Particular emphasis was placed on the collaborative association of United Nations bodies, civil society and the private sector. An in-depth consideration also took place on the matter of the disconnect between knowledge and aptitudes, on

the one hand, and the needs of the labour market, on the other.

In the Council's coordination meetings, consideration was also given to the follow-up process for the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Conference on Financing for Development. It was agreed to avoid overlap between this process and the outcomes of Rio+20 in terms of financing for development. Likewise, a special meeting was held on innovative mechanisms of development financing. That meeting concluded by highlighting the need to consolidate global endeavours through special funds that could extend existing initiatives and introduce new, innovative mechanisms, such as green vouchers, without duplicating efforts.

During the series of meetings on operational activities, preparations were completed for the Assembly's quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In this regard, consideration was given to the following matters, among others: assessment of the funding of the United Nations system; the establishment of better instruments to enhance coherence; the strengthening of the resident coordinator system; and the enhancement of the efficacy of entrepreneurial activities. This has given rise to a very solid analytical foundation on which to base efforts to ensure that the work of the Assembly during the current session can be pursued in the most substantive manner possible.

The series of meetings on humanitarian matters focused, as in earlier years, on the most complex emergencies occurring around the world and on solutions to improve responses to future crises. As we all remember, that series of meetings this year was notable for its emphasis on the transition from aid to development, particularly in addressing the challenges of the Sahel region. Many participants drew attention to the need to maintain the flow of international aid at a level above and beyond what is needed in terms of an immediate response in that region. Specifically, development assistance in the region must encourage growth and promote stability and shared prosperity for all.

In the series of general meetings, the Council adopted measures with respect to a very wide range of issues on the basis of reports prepared by the functional and regional commissions, non-governmental organizations, the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, and various specialized bodies and experts. Allow me to briefly draw attention to three concrete outcomes of that series of meetings.

First, a new plan of action was adopted to ensure that the entire system can make progress on gender equality and the advancement of women.

With respect to the least developed countries, the Council paved the way for follow-up to the Istanbul Programme of Action and supported the inclusion of the Republic of South Sudan on the list of least developed countries and the removal of Vanuatu from that same list. The Council urgently appeals to the General Assembly to promptly adopt measures with respect to these recommendations.

In addition, particular attention was given to aid effectiveness and policy coherence in South Sudan and Haiti, emphasizing efforts to ensure commitment, transparency and accountability among those involved in the development of those countries. At the same time, the Council focused on strengthening its own collaborative relationships, recognizing an additional 286 non-governmental organizations as consultative entities.

The Economic and Social Council must continue to build on the foundations of its 2012 achievements, taking into account the challenges inherent in sustainable development, including the integration of the three principal pillars of sustainable development. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development re-emphasized the mandate of the Economic and Social Council as one of the principal organs responsible for the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the outcomes of all United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and associated fields. It also recognized — and I think this is particularly important — that the Council has made a decisive contribution to the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced fashion. As you stated, Sir, this must be further pursued by the Assembly.

This renewed and strengthened mandate requires the Economic and Social Council to build its capacity to successfully integrate the social, environmental and economic agendas and to convene all relevant actors. It has therefore requested the Secretary-General — and, through him, Member States and other relevant actors — to submit proposals on its strengthening, particularly of its methods of work.

Lastly, allow me to state that the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council welcomes the unfailing cooperation of Governments and other associated actors within the United Nations system that support these reform processes and who await concrete proposals, having repeatedly affirmed their readiness to immediately undertake significant efforts for a comprehensive reform and the construction of the future we all want.

The President: I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Beviglia Zampetti (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

We would like to thank the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council for introducing the Council's report (A/67/3). We would also like to acknowledge with gratitude the support provided by the Secretariat to the Council this year. The European Union and its member States commend the work of the Council during the reporting period and recognize the committed leadership of its President, Mr. Miloš Koterec of Slovakia, and of the Bureau.

In the next few weeks and months, we will be actively engaged in the review of resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. In that regard, this statement will focus on three points. First, the EU is encouraged by the progress in the revitalization of the Council. The Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review, for example, have become important elements of the Council's substantive session. Secondly, while we primarily need to build upon that progress, there is room for improvement in many areas in order to make the Council more effective and efficient in its working methods. Thirdly, the relevance of the Council ultimately depends on our own willingness to make it work.

The EU and its member States would like to acknowledge the comprehensive preparations carried out for the substantive session of the Council, including through the organization of events such as the joint meeting with the Peacebuilding Commission and the dialogue with youth representatives on jobs held during the year. We equally welcome the work on employment undertaken by the Council at its current session. We appreciate the role of the Council in fostering dialogue and helping to forge converging views and a coherent policy vision on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and, in particular, the contribution of the Development Cooperation Forum to promoting the broader post-2015 development agenda, especially on issues related to development effectiveness, mutual accountability and development-oriented partnerships.

The Economic and Social Council is an important and, in some respects, essential institutional home for our debates and deliberations. It provides us with a useful mechanism for oversight and coordination of the crucial United Nations work in the economic, social and environmental fields, including its operational activities for development. The Council also has a strong mandate to contribute to improved coherence and coordination and a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and of the long-term perspective regarding policymaking. We should collectively commit to following up on these efforts over time.

However, there is always room for improvement. The Economic and Social Council can build on its convening power at the international level on global challenges, trends and emerging issues. The Council has a unique position as the main body for system-wide coordination and for the follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields. The Council should strive to ensure better coherence in the way the system of subsidiary bodies, funds and programmes is able to respond to the mandates emanating from those outcomes. It should ensure a coherent policy vision for the Rio+20 follow-up and the broader post-2015 development agenda, contributing to convergence and coordination and avoiding the overlapping and duplication of processes.

Moreover, the multi-stakeholder nature of the Economic and Social Council is one of its most important features and something we should capitalize on. The Council has to be a window to realities outside the halls of the United Nations. The further strengthening of the Council's interactions with all stakeholders will

certainly improve public perception not only of that body, but also of the United Nations as a whole, and increase its ability to play a relevant role in global affairs. The implementation of sustainable development is a multi-stakeholder exercise that the Council should also better reflect in its working methods.

Ultimately, as we endeavour to review the implementation of relevant provisions related to the revitalization of the Council, it is our firm belief that the Council will be as strong and as relevant as we want it to be. As one participant stated during the special ministerial meeting of the Council in September, "we get the ECOSOC we deserve". The EU and its member States stand ready to actively participate, together with all our partners, in the reflection on how to further improve the Economic and Social Council's effectiveness.

Mr. Pisarevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank you, Mr. President, for your introductory remarks and the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council for his comprehensive introduction of the report of the Council (A/67/3).

Belarus commends the activities of the Economic and Social Council and notes the innovative approaches in its work. The Council remains the key policy platform at the global level for crafting strategies for collective action in the area of global development. The Development Cooperation Forum reaffirmed that fact. That event made it possible to undertake an analysis of current trends in international cooperation in the context of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

We view the Council as the coordinator for practical implementation of the decisions of the Rio Conference in order to reach a global transition to sustainable development. We must not let the consensus achieved in Brazil be buried by endless argument over procedural issues. After all, that in principle would delay substantive discussion by the international community on problematic issues and the formulation of the post-2015 agenda.

We believe that the Council's efforts at macroeconomic coordination seek to ensure sustainable and balanced growth of the world economy. The Council must act to ensure full compliance with the principles of free and fair trade, which preclude the use of various protectionist measures and unilateral economic sanctions. Furthermore, the Council must work to ensure that the implementation of the concepts of sustainable development and the green economy do not aggravate the existing development gap between developing and developed countries, strengthen the technological dependency of developing countries on developed countries, reduce a country's national capacity for choosing the most effective strategies for sustainable development, or create new dividing lines or barriers.

The work of the Council's 2012 substantive session reaffirmed the efforts of Member States to continue to rely on the mechanisms of the United Nations in order to address pressing social and economic challenges. We welcome the new forms of work that were undertaken at the session. Specifically, we note the dialogue of member States with the management of the primary operational funds and programmes on the issue of preparing for a quadrennial review of the operational activities of the United Nations with the presidents of the regional commissions of the United Nations on programme activities, and on the holding of side events on issues that are important for member States.

The holding of thematic events on medium-income countries and on assistance to talented youth have given additional impetus to discussing the forms of, and prospects for, cooperation in those areas between the members and the agencies of the United Nations system. We support the continuing practice of holding high-level meetings of the Council by inviting the leaders of the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the International Labour Organization on the most pressing problems of the global economy and finances. Accordingly, we expect that those discussions, taking place in the context of a high degree of global economic and financial instability, will be aimed at crystallizing practical steps to ensure sustainable economic development.

We look forward to the proposals of the Secretary-General on strengthening the Council and improving its working methods in the light of the views of its Members.

We call on all interested States Members of the United Nations to contribute to strengthening the Economic and Social Council. We cannot allow the reform of the Council to be turned into an endless renovation that one can only suspend but never bring to a successful conclusion. Today's realities leave no time for such an experiment. We all need a strong Economic and Social Council right now.

Ms. Prince (United States of America): The United States values the Economic and Social Council as an essential platform for exchanging ideas, learning from one another's national experiences and sharpening our collective thinking about a next-generation global development agenda. Strengthening the Council has been a long-standing item on our shared agenda. In the run-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), we began a renewed conversation about our multilateral institutions and how we can better adapt them to meet the challenges and opportunities before us as a global community.

The global development landscape is changing dramatically. New drivers of wealth coexist with chronic impediments to prosperity. By 2030, the world population will grow to 8.3 billion people, who will rightly have rising expectations for their future and who will make increasing demands on our world's resources. A growing youth demographic will coexist with the increasing age of most countries' populations. Urbanization will accelerate, and new technologies will continue to create opportunities for innovation and action.

Our international architecture for development will have to evolve apace. It will need to become more responsive to twenty-first-century development dynamics and what drives development decisions and outcomes, including by better mobilizing and targeting existing multilateral expertise, resources and capacities. It will need to explore ways to reconcile the United Nations system's diverse authorities with greater incentives for coherence. It will also need renewed commitment to evidence-based decision-making, as well as monitoring and evaluation that are responsive to the results that we are trying to achieve. Moreover, it will finally need a degree of flexibility, especially because we are just at the beginning of our deliberations on elaborating a post-2015 development agenda.

The Economic and Social Council has essential tools and should be a central venue for examining those issues. Its thematic breadth and responsibility for policy deliberation, coordination and oversight make it an important forum for a new approach that emphasizes convergence, value added and results. For example, a key issue such as women's roles and sustainable rural development could be established as a thread that runs through all parts of the Council's system, from the spring meetings of the Bretton Woods institutions to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Science and Technology.

We know that we must cooperate in new ways that span the existing development architecture and bridge institutional barriers. That includes partnerships with the private sector, other multilateral entities and non-governmental organizations, as well as civil society and local actors.

Overall, the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies can provide a practical forum for integrated policy debate and support. That will require strengthened working methods, more responsive agenda-setting and a commitment to ongoing innovation. The high-level political forum agreed at Rio can also build on the strengths of the Economic and Social Council system. Overall, we need to modernize institutional arrangements to be focused, serious, credible and responsive to citizens and leaders alike. Above all, we need to deliver results to people around the world who rightly are demanding them.

Finally, the United States would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for the granting of the United Nations Population Award earlier this year to a pioneering advocate for reproductive health, Ms. Adrienne Germain. Ms. Germain has been in the forefront of the field of women's rights and family planning since the 1970s. She was a member of the United States delegations to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, and has served as a civil society adviser in recent years to the United States delegation to the United Nations Commission on Population and Development. She is well known to our Mission and others in New York, and we are gratified that the contributions of this prominent American in this important field have been acknowledged with this award.

Mr. O'Brien (India): I am privileged to address the General Assembly. I bring greetings from India. We are in the midst of our biggest festival of the year in Bengal, the state of India where I live, and on behalf of the people of India and the people of Bengal, I would like to wish everyone here in the Hall a happy and prosperous Durga Puja.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June this year, the global community made a solemn promise to craft a future that

would truly and really — and not just in some clichéd way — belong to all, to each one of us, to every child of Mother Earth. It was a promise to the marginalized to deliver a life of dignity, a life of hope. It was a pledge to fight poverty as the greatest global challenge.

With just three years to go to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) finish line, where do we stand? The task at hand remains a daunting one. More than a billion people in developing countries continue to live in extreme poverty, hunger and hopeless desperation. We need to do much more. About the MDGs, we can take some comfort in collectively having made progress on poverty eradication, primary education, gender equality and sanitation. However, when we introspect, our record on maternal mortality, infant mortality and malnutrition remains a matter of deep and abiding concern.

We will have a planet that is more populous in the twenty-first century than ever before in human history. Yet, are we doing enough to harness that demographic dividend? In India, we have pursued the path of inclusive growth for achieving poverty eradication. We have in fact brought down poverty numbers significantly as compared with the 1990 levels, but we continue to be challenged by more than 300 million people living below the poverty line of $1.25 a day. That number, 300 million people, is about equivalent to the population of the United States, which should emphasize the enormity of the crisis and the moral obligation that still confronts us.

In primary education, India has achieved a near 100 per cent enrolment. In part, that has been a result of our Right to Education Act, which makes eight years of schooling a legal right that the Indian State must ensure to every citizen. The challenge now is to focus on the quality of learning in our schools and to further narrow the gender gap in secondary and primary schooling. Over the past decade, we have for the first time in our history added more female literates than males, an achievement that we are justifiably proud of.

However, India is conscious of the health and social development gaps that have yet to be addressed. Our commitment to tackling infant and maternal mortality and augmenting women's empowerment remains absolute and unflinching. In fact, it is part of our nation-building tradition. As Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, one of the foremost minds of nineteenth-century Bengal, a pioneer of modern India and a champion of gender rights, female emancipation and girls' education, wrote:

> "How sad! The country whose male population is unkind, unreligious and unaware of the distinction between the good and the evil, and does not care about justice and fairness, and where abiding the rituals is the chief preoccupation of religion, should not give birth to girls!"

That philosophy, which Vidyasagar explained in the 1850s, 150 years ago, anticipated the enlightenment of the MDGs. The MDGs represent the most cherished chapter of multilateralism. At Rio+20, we discussed practically every aspect of human endeavour and came up with a blueprint for action on sustainable development that rightfully integrates economic growth with social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

As we sit down to fashion the sustainable development goals, we must do so with a clear idea that they would form the crux of the post-2015 development agenda. Dealing with challenges related to poverty, food, energy and livelihood issues should be our priority. The MDG framework has given us valuable lessons as to what works and what does not work. There is little value in trying to reinvent the wheel. The framework of MDG goals should be replicated in the new set of goals.

Our commitment to the MDGs and to Rio+20 is unwavering, but the global economic situation does not seem to favour us. Slackened growth, high inflation — particularly food inflation — a mounting debt burden and high youth unemployment are undercutting the development gains made in developing countries. It is therefore of fundamental importance that we, as a global community, be able to put the world economy back on track. Nothing can be more helpful as we do our best to put more resources into and bring greater focus onto our development goals.

We must also redouble our efforts to push for urgent progress on the Doha Development Round. Those who profess that more trade and not aid is the answer to the development gaps of our era need to put their words into action. Shibboleths alone cannot do it. It is equally imperative to fashion a comprehensive and balanced outcome to climate-change negotiations, based on the principles of common but differentiated responsibility and equity.

South-South cooperation must also contribute, and it must be allowed to grow within its own space

and its own ecosystem and in accordance with its own principles. It cannot and must not be a substitute for North-South cooperation. The two processes are complementary and, as a world community, we have to avoid limiting ourselves to either-or choices.

An issue of crucial importance today for sustainable development is the deficit of global governance. Without addressing the issue of global governance, we cannot restructure the twenty-first century comity of nations as an equitable matrix that serves the cause of all. The decisions of the self-selected few can hardly provide the solutions we seek for the many. It is crucial, therefore, that developing countries be given due voice and participation in the decision-making structures of the global economic and financial institutions, especially the Bretton Woods institutions.

Here at the United Nations, it is critical that we move urgently on reform of the Security Council by expanding it in both categories, permanent and non-permanent, to revitalize the General Assembly and strengthen the Economic and Social Council.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, born out of the Earth Summit, remains a seminal global compact on development. This past week in India, we successfully concluded the Eleventh Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. We hope that its outcome will help us achieve our collective commitments. I wish to thank all participants for their support in making that event a success.

Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In the developing countries, feeding our people and providing them with sustenance is a challenge that we grapple with every day. We are hopeful that our biodiversity resources and conservation efforts will help us find new solutions to food security and livelihood issues.

Space scientists call our Earth the "Goldilocks planet" — not too hot, not too cold, just right for life. Indeed, in keeping with that imagery, humankind's evolution and prodigious attainments over the millennia that have passed have been nothing short of a fairy tale — a true miracle. True, our challenges are many, but given what we have achieved; given the diseases and scourges we have beaten back; and given the disasters and calamities we have learned to protect ourselves against, what we are left with is, frankly, only the last mile.

With our collaborative effort and collective will, we can do it. We can fashion a better world for ourselves, and as a legacy for our children and succeeding generations. Acting multilaterally, though institutions and agencies such as the United Nations, we represent hope for millions across the world. This is a hope that seeks only basic necessities of life. This is a hope we cannot betray.

As the great Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore, the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize for literature, eloquently put it: "I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy." Let us, as a global community, awaken to service and to joy.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is pleased to participate in discussing one of the most important items on the agenda of the General Assembly, as reflected in the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/67/3). At the outset, I would like to commend the contents of the report on the effective contributions and activities undertaken by the Economic and Social Council in the past session.

The suffocating financial crisis that the world has witnessed in recent years is still casting its shadow over the global economy. Abject poverty, increased unemployment and a host of other issues stand between many developing countries and their achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. All those challenges make us more determined than ever to support the work of the Economic and Social Council, develop its mechanisms and improve its competence as the supreme international organ concerned with achieving socioeconomic development, supporting the welfare of peoples and raising their standards of living. Given the fundamental role that the Council plays in fostering sustainable development, I would like to emphasize the importance of strengthening the partnership between it and the other principal organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly.

The international community currently bears the huge responsibility of addressing socioeconomic challenges. It is therefore important to emphasize the need to translate the results of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development into a tangible reality, especially with regard to sustainable development, the environment, climate change and the integration of economic visions in a manner that will help United States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Achieving the three pillars of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — requires our countries to adopt comprehensive national policies to create a climate conducive to supporting those pillars and enacting appropriate legislation for their implementation. That investment in our countries' capabilities will enable us to foster common international economic cooperation in confronting the challenges of our times.

The State of Kuwait, based on its firm belief in the concept of international partnership, is helping developing countries to overcome the obstacles and difficulties they face by financing economic and development projects to improve their economies.

In recognition of the clear underpinnings of our foreign policy, which is based on fostering and strengthening relations among States in order to achieve an ideal model for international partnership, built upon mutual respect and common interests, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has provided more than $18 billion in assistance over the past five decades in the form of grants, technical support and concessional loans to more than 100 developing and least developed countries to help them achieve sustainable development.

The State of Kuwait has continued to launch initiatives calling for the establishment of specialized funds covering different parts of the world in order to address economic, educational, environmental, health and development issues. It also contributes to resolving issues of unemployment, food security and other challenges faced by the peoples of developing countries. The latest such initiative was launched by His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, at the first summit of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, hosted by the State of Kuwait from 15 to 17 October, to establish a fund to finance development projects in non-Arab Asian countries with $2 billion in capital. His Highness also announced that Kuwait will contribute $300 million to help the least developed countries in Asia achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, His Highness announced Kuwait's readiness to join the Asian Development Bank, based on his interest in increasing Kuwait's cooperation with Asian countries.

The State of Kuwait attaches special importance to the activities of the Economic and Social Council and commits itself fully to the Council's decisions and policies, and to those of its subsidiary committees, to coordinate and strengthen economic cooperation with a view to advancing the development goals, in particular the eradication of poverty, combating serious and communicable diseases, and achieving sustainable development. Furthermore, the State of Kuwait has never spared any effort in supporting the work of international and regional institutions involved in the field of development to enable them to carry out their functions by providing them with all kinds of ongoing assistance and support to help developing countries and the least developed countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Based on its belief in the important role of the Economic and Social Council, the State of Kuwait presented its candidature for membership of the Council for the term 2013-2015. The election is to be held on 31 October. We hope to receive the support and backing of Member States in order to enable us to proceed with our efforts in the economic, social and environmental fields through the international organ responsible for integrating and coordinating international activities in those fields.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): Allow me to begin by thanking the Ambassador of Mexico, who in his capacity as Vice-President of the Council presented the report of the Council (A/67/3) on behalf of its President. We commend the work of the Council and the leadership of Ambassador Miloš Koterec in steering the proceedings of the Council during the reporting year.

Over the years, the Economic and Social Council has played an important role in advancing a concerted approach to the global development agenda. It strives to promote an integrated and coordinated implementation of the commitments made in the major United Nations conferences and summits. The two innovative functions entrusted to that body — namely, the holding of the annual ministerial review and the biennial Development Cooperation Forum — are considered to be useful in providing substantive inputs and thereby contributing to a more effective follow-up.

Through these mechanisms, the Council is able to assess national and international efforts to achieve the development goals. It is now possible for the Council to take a deeper look at all the cross-cutting areas of the outcomes of the major United Nations global events in economic and social areas. The focus of the most recent annual ministerial review — the eradication of poverty, which is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — has indeed facilitated an in-depth analysis of the progress made and remaining challenges in

fighting that global scourge. It is timely as we approach the deadline for achieving the MDGs.

With all that good work being done, we still believe that there is room for further improvement in the functioning of the Economic and Social Council. We can and must work to make the Council the central United Nations organ for the coordination and supervision of development activities, as was originally envisaged by the United Nations Charter and subsequently strengthened by various United Nations resolutions, particularly resolution 61/16. In that regard, the recently held United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) provided considerable inputs which can help bring about the necessary reform of that organ.

The United Nations conferences and summits held since the 1990s have generated an extraordinary global awareness of the need to pursue sustained, inclusive and equitable development. It is a widely shared view that full and effective implementation of the outcomes of those events could significantly contribute towards achieving the cherished objective of prosperity for all.

As we engage in the annual review of the outcome and implementation of major global conferences, we need to take stock of the current situation, evaluate how much progress we have been able to achieve, and identify what more is required to implement them fully. While there has been progress in several areas, it is clear that a lot remains to be achieved. Certainly, there is a need for resolute action to move the development agenda forward. The global economic uncertainties should not become an excuse for inaction. The Economic and Social Council has an important role to play in that regard.

The ongoing global economic and financial challenges pose serious impediments to peace, security and development. Unemployment, volatile food and energy prices erode the policy space for developing countries in advancing economic development efforts. That has further undermined the limited capacity of the poorer countries to cope with external shocks and vulnerabilities.

It is now evident that many developing countries, particularly the least developed countries (LDCs), will not be able to meet MDG targets within the timeline. A key element for not being able to realize those minimum development aspirations is the gap in development financing. Official development assistance (ODA) remains an important source of development financing for the developing countries, especially for the LDCs. There is a need for enhanced and predictable official development assistance, aligned with the priorities of developing countries.

At the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, the global community agreed that our collective goal was to eradicate poverty, achieve sustained economic growth and promote sustainable development. The commitment made in Monterrey and reiterated in Doha needs to be fulfilled urgently. The ODA commitment of 0.7 per cent of gross national income must be met at the earliest possible date.

It is important that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council look into the most appropriate modalities for follow-up to major conferences and summits, with a view to promoting coherent, coordinated and integrated United Nations actions in that regard. Poverty eradication must continue to be the foremost priority of the post-2015 global development agenda. At Rio+20, it was unequivocally recognized as the greatest global challenge. Our work on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and sustainable development goals must be anchored in those imperatives. We should attach due importance to considering such issues as education, health care, employment and access to water and sanitation while drafting the sustainable development goals in the coming days. In fact, all the unmet MDGs should be subsumed within the future sustainable development goals.

Climate change is having a serious impact on many countries and even threatening their existence. Its impact is undermining the development efforts of many countries. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change could not assure us of robust and immediate actions on its decisions, including in the areas of adaptation and mitigation. It is high time that a global, comprehensive and ambitious agreement on climate change be reached, in line with and reflecting the Kyoto Protocol. The agreement should include not only provisions on greenhouse gas emissions, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and burden-sharing, but also the concerns of climate migrants, the transfer of green technologies, and provisions of the Green Climate Fund, among others, for adaptation and mitigation purposes. We must

also push for an early implementation of the Cancún Agreements.

We all know that international trade is a critical engine of development, especially for developing countries that are dependent on exports. Undoubtedly, lack of market access, Aid for Trade and the absence of a multilateral rules-based trading system continue to deny a level playing field for all and to affect the trade prospects of developing countries.

If we wish to make trade truly an engine of inclusive growth, it is essential to restart the stalled Doha Development Round and bring it to a conclusion at the earliest possible date. The Round must comprehensively address trade-distorting factors, including agricultural subsidies in developed countries. Duty-free and quota-free market access and support for the productive capacity-building of LDCs should be pursued expeditiously and comprehensively. Developed and developing countries in a position to do so must provide duty-free and quota-free facilities to all products from all LDCs. This can and should be done even before the conclusion of the Doha Round, under the "early harvest" measures of the World Trade Organization.

We cannot overemphasize the need to have a coordinated, inclusive, equitable and transparent follow-up to all these global aspirations, as reflected in the outcomes of global conferences and summits.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the President for holding this joint debate. I also would like to express our appreciation for the documents submitted under this agenda item (A/67/3, A/67/298 and A/67/82).

The ongoing global financial and economic crisis has reversed much of the world's economic growth and badly affected much-needed development, particularly in the developing countries. This crisis has threatened the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

Against this backdrop, at the national level, Malaysia has adopted forward-looking macroeconomic policies through the tenth Malaysia Plan, aimed at delivering high economic growth in a sustained, inclusive and equitable manner and ensuring that Malaysia is on track to become a high-income nation by 2020. At the global level, Malaysia will continue to share its knowledge and experience in economic and social development with other countries, especially the least developed countries, through capacity-building initiatives conducted through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme and through other similar initiatives undertaken in conjunction with development partners, including the United Nations.

Malaysia is grateful for and elated by the selection of the Federation of Reproductive Health Associations of Malaysia as the recipient for the 2012 United Nations Population Award in the institutional category, in recognition of the Federation's outstanding achievements in advocating reproductive health and advancing the health and status of women and children in Malaysia.The Federation has played an important role in bringing visibility to family planning not only in Malaysia but also in other parts of Asia. It has also demonstrated a high level of commitment to improving the lives of disadvantaged communities, including refugees, sex workers, and transsexual and marginalized youth in juvenile homes and orphanages. Given these outstanding contributions, the recognition by the United Nations is very apt and timely.

Malaysia concurs with the two functions entrusted by the World Summit to the Economic and Social Council — the Annual Ministerial Review and the Biennial Development Cooperation Forum — whose aim is to ensure the effective implementation of the development agenda. It is important also that the Council work as a system and continue to adopt the themes of reviews well in advance in order to give the various actors sufficient time to contribute to its deliberations.

Looking ahead, Malaysia believes that the Council should review its role within the United Nations system in the integrated follow-up to conferences and the modalities for actors within the Organization to contribute to such follow-up. To promote coherence, coordination and integration of the United Nations apparatus, the Council should also continue to look into the most appropriate modalities for follow-up to major conferences and summits.

The deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets is fast approaching. While some progress has been made, it is well known that many developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, are still far from achieving their MDG targets by 2015. The challenges we face today are different from those of some years ago. The current global landscape, financial and economic pressures and environmental issues are hampering countries' efforts

to achieve global development goals. In this regard, we urge all countries to re-strategize and realign their approaches to economic and social development.

Malaysia is also of the view that the efforts to eradicate extreme poverty should be complemented by efforts to provide better access to basic infrastructure, and that equal priority should be given to improving access to basic services. To this end, our partners from developed countries can continue to assist us in poverty eradication in the developing world by continuing to fulfil their official development assistance commitments. While we recognize that our partners may be facing economic difficulties at home, we are confident that such difficulties will not prevent them from fulfilling their official development assistance commitments, as agreed at numerous United Nations conferences.

The 2010 MDG review shows that Malaysia has attained, or is on track to attain, the MDGs at aggregate level by 2015. In 2009, the poverty rate in Malaysia decreased to 3.8 per cent and, just last year, 63,147 poor households were elevated under the 1AZAM programme, a hardcore poverty eradication programme of the Malaysian Government. In order to plan, implement and monitor poverty eradication programmes, Malaysia introduced a monitoring system, called e-Kasih, in November 2007. E-Kasih was awarded first prize in the United Nations Public Service Awards for 2012, in recognition of its significant contribution to poverty eradication. The e-Kasih is a database system created at the national level to collect data on poor families in Malaysia; it ensures the fair distribution of assistance and avoids overlap between the aid programmes of multiple Government agencies.

The progress made towards achieving the MDGs has encouraged Malaysia to further improve other key areas of development in rural areas through the adoption of effective policy actions. The Government has also established the necessary framework, which comprises four main pillars as drivers of change. These pillars are the six national key result areas, as outlined in the Government Transformation Programme, the 12 national key economic areas of the Economic Transformation Programme, the strategic economic reforms in the New Economic Model, and the tenth Malaysia Plan. These four pillars, which put emphasis on inclusiveness and sustainability, are intended to be the bas for propelling Malaysia forward towards becoming a high-income nation by 2020.

As the deadline for achieving the MDG targets is less than three years away, Malaysia would like to reaffirm its commitment to joining the rest of the international community in further accelerating progress towards the MDGs by 2015 and actively contributing to the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, including the fashioning of sustainable development goals. In this respect, we are pleased to note that Malaysia has become an increasingly active international partner for development and will continue to share its knowledge and experience in economic and social development with other developing countries. As an active player in South-South cooperation, Malaysia has offered its expertise in areas of capacity-building and human-capital development to fellow developing countries, mainly through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme. Since the Programme's launch in 1980, more than 25,000 participants from 140 countries have benefited from it.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Malaysia's commitment to implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields by pursuing a development policy framework that is focused on high growth through sustained, inclusive and equitable economic, social and environmental policies, guided by the principles and objectives of sustainable development.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank Ambassador De Alba, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, for presenting the Council's report (A/67/3), and to express my gratitude to the Secretariat for having supported the work of the Council this year.

The Russian delegation has consistently advocated the strengthening of the Council's coordination role within the United Nations development system. We view the Council as a key United Nations forum for crafting collective approaches to pressing social and economic problems.

We welcome the convening of the special ministerial meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the issue of strengthening the multilateral system for sustainable development in September. The outcome of that discussion provided a firm basis for holding a second round of consultations on reviewing progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Council during this session of the General Assembly.

In our view, the primary task of that review is to define the Council's role in negotiating and implementing new priorities for the post-2015 socioeconomic agenda and in the emerging global structure for international development cooperation. As part of the review, we also look forward to in-depth discussions of ways to optimize the agenda and the programme of work of the Council's substantive session.

Further work on reforming the socioeconomic sector of the United Nations must be based on the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex). We believe that the establishment of a high-level forum on sustainable development is an integral part of the process of strengthening the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies.

Overall, we commend the outcome of the Council's substantive session this year, including the Annual Ministerial Review on the progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the Development Cooperation Forum. We note the useful work with regard to coordinating the operational activities and humanitarian affairs segments of the session. That clearly reaffirms the Council's important role in ensuring system-wide coherence and the required and effective implementation of the priorities on the global social and economic agenda.

For the first time since 2006, the United Nations platform was used for a comprehensive discussion under the theme of all aspects of employment. The political guidelines for United Nations work in that area were set out. Without infringing on the leading role and the prerogatives of the International Labour Organization, the Council was able to provide significant updates on the decent-work issues on the United Nations agenda.

The ministerial declaration, based on the outcomes of the review, has become a firm normative basis for strengthening the work and enhancing the coherence and coordination of all United Nations structures and bodies. Decisions within the Economic and Social Council must seek to further enhance multilateral development cooperation and the effective implementation of the concept of decent work.

The contributions of the Economic and Social Council will be duly taken into account in preparing for the International High-level Conference on Decent Work, to be held in Moscow in December. During the session, the Russian representative made a national voluntary presentation that reflected the national strategy and practical measures undertaken by our country to promote sustained and fair economic growth, to improve the social well-being of the population and to ensure further progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Allow me once again to express my gratitude to delegations for their active and constructive participation in discussing the report. In 2012, the Economic and Social Council reaffirmed its key role in the process of intergovernmental follow-up to the various international conferences on financing for development. We welcome the outcome of the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. We also welcome the efforts of the President and the Bureau of the Council to establish informal contacts, in particular with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

One of the Council's priorities should be to continue expanding mutually beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and international financial and trade institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations so as to effectively implement the international development agenda.

The Russian Federation is ready to cooperate constructively with all partners in order to further strengthen the Economic and Social Council, given the role of the United Nations in global economic governance.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina would like to thank Ambassador De Alba for presenting the annual report of the Economic and Social Council (A/67/3).

The United Nations must play a central role in world governance so that the international community can adequately respond to the many and increasing global challenges. Apart from the urgency of the topics addressed by the Security Council, which means that its decisions always seem to be critical and to appear on the front pages of the press, the daily challenges in relation to economic and social development that are faced by most of the world's population are equally pressing or more so. That is an area where the United Nations is not up to meeting the current challenge. That has become increasingly clear since the end of the Cold War.

Under the Charter, the Economic and Social Council, as a principal organ of the United Nations, has a prominent role in dealing with current challenges, such as promoting a transparent, fair and non-discriminatory international economic system that brings about development, social inclusion and economic growth, in particular in developing countries.

The current reality is that the Council is not able to meet the present economic and social challenges. We must find a way to make it more effective so that it can contribute decisively to the promotion of the three pillars of sustainable development, namely, social development, economic growth and environmental protection. To that end, we believe that the Council's agenda should be streamlined because it currently deals with countless reports on numerous topics without achieving the expected result.

We also believe that the Council should act as a sounding board for discussions taking place both in its subsidiary bodies and in ad hoc forums. Above all, it should be able to take responsibility for the discussion of the main topics in the international economic and social field.

The Council should also undertake the appropriate follow-up to effectively implement the resolutions that it adopts. For example, this year, it adopted a resolution that underscored the need to give the eradication of poverty the highest priority in the United Nations development agenda (E/RES/2012/12). That resolution must be fully implemented.

The Council should generate a vigorous debate on current issues, such as growth with social inclusion, to which Argentina attaches the greatest importance. Through active State policies that focus on employment, social inclusion and industrial growth, Argentina has been able to achieve some of the highest growth rates in the world, while creating jobs and reducing poverty levels. The investment rate reached a record 24.5 per cent of gross domestic product in 2011. We registered a dramatic fall in the unemployment rate from more than 20 per cent in 2002 to 7.2 per cent in the second quarter of 2012.

The Council should invite relevant international organizations, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to participate in discussions so as to reach solutions to specific social problems. As the Trade and Development Report 2012 notes, in order for growth and development to be inclusive, it is necessary to take active employment and redistribution measures, as well as macroeconomic policies that promote productive investment and create decent jobs. A better distribution of income increases aggregate demand, investment and growth, which, in turn, will accelerate job creation.

Emerging economies continue to foment global growth. It is sufficient to cite the forecasts of the International Monetary Fund for gross domestic product growth for 2012 and 2013. They indicate that emerging and developing economies are proving to be the engines of global growth, with a rate of 5.6 per cent for 2012 and 5.9 per cent for 2013. Meanwhile, the developed economies, the epicentre of the global economic crisis, show a growth forecast of 1.4 per cent in 2012 and 1.9 per cent in 2013.

However, we have been attacked in multilateral forums by some who seek to discourage the use of public policies to which we are legally entitled, in an attempt to limit the scope of our legitimate economic policy. The ultimate goal of such attacks is to enable developed countries to dump their exportable surpluses on our domestic markets, through constrictive fiscal policies that limit global aggregate demand. By contrast, nothing is said in the same forums about the stimulus packages and subsidies that the most powerful economies continue to provide for their own industrial and agricultural sectors and that have harmful repercussions for developing countries. To the formidable sums that in recent years, in response to the international crisis, have been expended on agricultural support for domestic producers, there have been added millions in fiscal and monetary stimulus packages, whose real overall distortive impact is immeasurable.

We are convinced that only a system of global governance based on an efficient, inclusive, representative and transparent multilateral decision-making system, with clear and fair rules, can provide effective solutions to global problems. Prioritizing and strengthening the Economic and Social Council could be a step in that direction. That will depend on the political will of its members.

Ms. Morgan (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first express our gratitude for the leadership of the President of the Economic and Social Council and of the representatives of Egypt, Indonesia and Spain in conducting the work of the Council in 2012.

A coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields, as well as the formulation of a coherent, unified and universal post-2015 development agenda, calls for an Economic and Social Council capable of responding to today's challenges. We believe that the Council is the natural forum for a global approach to addressing development-related issues. Nonetheless, the Council, and its system of regional and organic committees, must regain the necessary effectiveness and capacity to be able to define and follow up on a development agenda and to involve the relevant stakeholders. What is needed is a process of thorough institutional reform that will enable the Council to comply fully with its mandate as laid down in Chapter X of the Charter. We are encouraged by the discussion that was initiated during the special ministerial meeting of the Council on 24 September, and we await with interest the report requested of the Secretary-General, with proposals for reform.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development reaffirmed the mandate of the Council as one of the principal organs charged with carrying out the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, and recognized its decisive contribution to the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. A renewed and strengthened Council should be able to fulfil three specific functions: provide leadership and integration capacity; promote coordination and follow-up for a global development agenda; and promote more effective systemic cohesion and coordination. We should also revive the Council's former dynamism, which could be imparted to it by the discussion and formulation of recommendations on serious and important topics that are currently facing the international community.

Reform should be based on the premise that, for the Council to be effective, it needs a systemic approach that can enable it to retain its capacity to act and respond to development's central challenges and to ensure that each of its instruments gives added value. It should do its work in a timely fashion, and to that end should revise its current meeting schedule and end the practice of concentrating too much of its work into a single month of the year. It should also make use of its instruments to create inclusive spaces that can incorporate other actors.

As the coordinating entity for funds and programmes, we should strengthen the Development Cooperation Forum as the central platform from which we can build and reinforce interaction between the principal stakeholders in international cooperation, including the United Nations funds and programmes. We also believe that, with a view to the future post-2015 development agenda, the Council must strengthen its role as a central platform for monitoring progress in commitments made in the area of international development. We should therefore ensure that the annual ministerial review has a solid and inclusive preparatory and follow-up process that is supported by the entire United Nations system.

The reform of our multilateral development institutions is urgent. We should integrate the various fragmented efforts surrounding the Organization's development agenda, take advantage of synergies and avoid dissipating our already scant resources, working within a renewed strategic framework where every one of our actors plays its assigned role. In that context, the mission of the Council should be to generate shared spaces where the relevant actors can make decisions.

Furthermore, the United Nations should not have parallel development agendas. We require an integrated agenda where, once and for all, development is understood to be a single whole that incorporates distinct but mutally complementary and reinforcing pillars. We call on all Member States, without exception, to act and to cooperate with one another to improve the quality of life of their citizens. Finally, with respect to the development agenda, we believe that the high-level political forum established in Rio de Janeiro not only should ensure the convergence between relevant actors at the global level but also should function as a bridge between the Assembly and the Council within the United Nations.

Before concluding, I would like to thank the President of the Assembly, on behalf of Mexico's delegation, for his commitment to developing with the Economic and Social Council a series of processes that can lead the United Nations to renew its development agenda.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Economic and Social Council contained in document A/67/3?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 9 and 14.

Agenda items 63 and 13 (*continued*)

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/204)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/205)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 63 and its sub-items (a) and (b) and agenda item 13 at its 25th and 26th plenary meetings, on 17 October.

Mr. Emvula (Namibia): Namibia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Cameroon on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/67/PV.25). The social and economic development of the African continent remains an urgent imperative. In order to succeed, we must redouble our collective efforts to improve the productive capacity of our economies and equip our people, especially the youth, with the needed skills and competencies. We should also do more to improve access to public services such as education, health care, housing, electricity and other social amenities. In that regard, we join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his reports (A/67/204 and A/67/205).

Global action to combat malaria has reduced deaths by more than one third, saving 1.1 million lives in sub-Saharan Africa over the past decade. Namibia has also made significant progress in the fight against malaria in the past 10 years. Although Namibia is not yet malaria-free, the number of malaria cases recorded across the country dropped by 97 per cent between 2001 and 2011.

The number of malaria deaths has also decreased from 1,747 in 2001, to a mere 45 in 2010, which is a mortality reduction of 98 per cent. The decline in the number of malaria cases is due to a campaign that includes the distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets and massive treatment efforts aimed at people who have contracted malaria. Namibia is on track to achieve malaria elimination by 2015.

African heads of State and Government adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) at the summit in Lusaka, Zambia, in 2001. That decision was hailed in Africa and by the international community at large as a milestone and an important paradigm shift in our approach to economic and social development. We have designed NEPAD as a development plan to free our continent and its people from the scourge of poverty and underdevelopment. It is a vision and a programme of priority actions and strategies to guide Africa's way forward. Namibia believes that we need to do more to fulfil the goals we set for ourselves when we established NEPAD.

We are convinced that the implementation and political championing of strategies and the active promotion of Africa's regional infrastructure through the work of the Heads of State and Government in the High-level Subcommittee on Infrastructure will ensure the success of NEPAD and the African Union in their efforts to find adequate funding for the projects we have identified and defined in accordance with our developmental needs.

In conclusion, let me underline that the primary responsibility for funding projects for Africa's development lies with Africans. Others should only complement our efforts. I therefore wish to appeal to all of the international community to demonstrate the political will required and to match our commitments with financial resources. Africa rose to the seemingly daunting challenge of defeating colonialism. Now is the time for us to rise to the challenge of Africa's economic development with the assistance of the international community — led by the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Africa — and with equal determination and creative energy.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend my thanks to the Secretary-General for his two reports (A/67/204 and A/67/205) on the item under discussion. I express my delegation's solidarity with the statements made at the

25th meeting by the representative of Cameroon, on behalf of the African States, and by the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

After the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the framework for Africa's socioeconomic development, the African countries have adopted political strategies and measures to carry out NEPAD's sectoral priorities, with the support of the international community.

African countries have achieved remarkable progress in consolidating democracy, human rights and good governance, as well as sound economic management. Yet, there have been noticeable adverse repercussions resulting from the world economic and financial crisis, including price fluctuations in energy and foodstuffs, and increased challenges owing to climate change, including drought, soil degradation, desertification and the loss of biological diversity. There have also been negative impacts on the fight against hunger and poverty and on the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Given that the African continent has been one of the worst affected by the world economic and financial crisis and despite the return of growth internationally, Africa remains vulnerable with inconsistent growth. It is therefore necessary to foster national efforts to achieve food security in Africa through increased allocations to agriculture and rural development in the budgets of the African countries and to ensure better and sounder management. In that regard, the international community must play a role in providing technological and financial support as well as modern agrarian skills to increase production and improve quality.

The fact that trade plays an important role in Africa in promoting economic growth, creating employment opportunities, especially given the huge unemployment we face, and achieving the MDGs, there is an urgent need to rectify trade practices that run counter to the rules of the World Trade Organization. All States, relevant institutions and multilateral entities should align their policies with those of the African States and provide assistance to strengthen trade, aimed at overcoming the existing challenges in order to ensure that Africa is on track to achieve free and fair trade.

Given the cardinal role of official development assistance in making progress on achieving sustainable development in developing countries, developed countries must fulfil the commitments made in the course of the major United Nations conferences on Africa. That requires all development partners, in particular the developed countries, to back the developing African countries by fostering investment and creating policies conducive to encouraging local and foreign investment. That is particularly necessary as desertification, land degradation and drought have had adverse effects on African efforts to achieve development.

To further regional efforts to address the problem, the international community should assist Africa in implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. As a member of NEPAD, Libya will continue to actively cooperate with African States to advance the NEPAD agenda for progress, growth and prosperity for African countries, through joint action, coordination and compliance with cooperation agreements concluded with numerous African States in the past. We will strive thereby for the MDGs to be achieved and for African countries to take their natural role in the international economic system, especially since they possess the valuable human and natural resources necessary for them to reach the goals they have set.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Lobry-Boulanger (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) supports the adoption last month of resolution 66/289, entitled "Consolidating gains and accelerating efforts to control and eliminate malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa, by 2015". We also welcome the inclusion of malaria among the Secretary-General's priorities for his second term.

We have collectively made significant progress in the fight against malaria over the past 10 years, as highlighted in the World Health Organization's 2011 *World Malaria Report*. We know that our success is the result of a significant scaling up of malaria prevention and control measures, including the widespread ownership and increased use of bednets, better diagnostics and the wider availability of effective medicines to treat malaria.

Despite those significant results, gains remain inequitable. While some countries are moving towards the elimination of malaria, many others continue to suffer unacceptably high burdens of the disease and require a rapid increase in prevention and control efforts.

We must not take recent hard-won advances in the global fight against malaria for granted. The gains made are fragile. Collectively, we must do more, do better and reach further. The IFRC calls for greater recognition, support and investment in community-based solutions, including a focus on the most vulnerable, marginalized and hard-to-reach communities, in order to ensure equitable access to malaria prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Malaria is first managed in homes and communities, and it will be at that level that we will continue to see the biggest returns on investment by empowering individuals to take informed action against the disease.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies and their community-based volunteers have played a crucial role in our global success to date. Those volunteers, who are intimately aware of local barriers to health interventions, are working in communities to expand the reach of prevention and control measures. Volunteers go door-to-door to ensure installation and proper care of nets, provide information on how to effectively prevent the disease, identify where to access diagnosis and treatment and promote rapid treatment-seeking behaviour for pregnant women and children under 5 years of age in order to stop preventable malaria deaths.

New technology is also playing a role. In Haiti, for example, the Red Cross, in addition to targeted distributions in at-risk communities, is using mobile technology to put life-saving information directly into the hands of people through a nationwide malaria prevention campaign that has included over 3.5 million SMS messages sent.

The IFRC believes that malaria control and reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will depend on sustained and increased funding support, as well as on political commitment. For instance, just by scaling up efforts to prevent malaria, including universal coverage with mosquito nets, an estimated 3 million children's lives will be saved by 2015.

Sustaining malaria-control efforts is an investment in development. Early and continued investment in malaria control will greatly assist malaria-endemic countries along the path to achieving the MDGs, especially those relating to improving child survival and maternal health, eradicating extreme poverty and expanding access to education. Furthermore, malaria funding can be used as a gateway for the integration of other key health services to address MDGs 4 and 5, thus offering a synergistic solution to resource constraints globally and within countries.

The power of partnership is one of the most important pieces in the fight against malaria. Malaria is the cause of massive human suffering, and the international community must play a greater role in supporting global partnerships to fight malaria. International efforts to scale up the proven, cost-effective tools available to prevent and control malaria must be maintained. However, in order to avoid the pitfalls experienced in past efforts to eradicate malaria, including growing resistance to insecticide and drugs, we must continue to invest in research and develop initiatives to stay ahead of the mosquito and the parasite. We cannot risk reversing today's gains and losing countless more lives to a preventable and treatable disease.

The Acting President: I thank the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

We have heard the last speaker in the debate on sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 63 and agenda item 13. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of those agenda items.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.